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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001123

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STATE PASS TO NEA/FO, NEA/RA, NEA/IPA, AND NEA/ARPI  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [WE](#) [GZ](#) [IS](#) [AE](#)  
SUBJECT: HAMAS' KHALED MESHAAL VISITS UAE

REF: ABU DHABI 952

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Minister of Presidential Affairs Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan received Hamas political chief Khaled Meshaal March 22. According to Foreign Ministry U/S Abdullah Rashid al-Noaimi, the UAEG had originally been reluctant to host Meshaal but decided that it was important to emphasize to Hamas the need for the new Hamas-led government to meet its international obligations, adhere to the Roadmap, and help the Palestinian people improve their lives. The UAEG also reiterated its support for Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as the UAE's intent to support the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal met March 22 with Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan, UAE Minister for Presidential Affairs, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammed al-Sha'ali. The Emiratis were originally reluctant to receive Meshaal, MFA U/S Abdullah Rashid al-Noaimi told Ambassador. Al-Noaimi gave three reasons for the UAE leadership's decision to receive Meshaal. One, they wanted to hear what was on Hamas' mind. Two, they wanted to encourage Hamas to take a more moderate course. Three, they wanted to enlighten Meshaal on the UAE's support for PA President Abbas and stress the international community's demand for the Roadmap to be respected, successful, and "not a one-sided policy."

¶3. (C) "We are not in love with Hamas," al-Noaimi told Ambassador, but "we need to enlighten them, to educate them. These people don't have experience in international politics, just at the community level." The UAE would continue to support the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people, he underscored. Ambassador highlighted USG's continuing concern for these humanitarian needs and noted that, as a major donor, the U.S. would look for ways to ensure that these legitimate needs would be met.

¶4. (C) Ambassador told al-Noaimi that it was unfortunate that the visit had provided Meshaal an Abu Dhabi platform from which to highlight Hamas' refusal to renounce armed resistance and to decry U.S. policy as "biased." She noted to al-Noaimi that a Reuters wire story with an Abu Dhabi dateline quoted Meshaal saying, "Armed resistance is legitimate." The wire story also included this Meshaal quote: "So long as there is Israeli occupation in Palestine

and so long as U.S. policy is biased, the so-called terrorism that the United States fears will escalate because the mistakes of U.S. foreign policy are pouring oil on fire." Ambassador emphasized the need for Hamas to disavow violence.

15. (C) The UAE's official news agency announced that Sheikh Mansour stressed the importance of continuing "political negotiations" to reach a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The UAE would continue to "respect the will of the Palestinian Arab people in determining their fate, identifying their options and choosing their government," and voiced the UAE's "full confidence in and support for efforts by the Palestinian National Authority in achieving stability and pushing the Middle East process forward." Sheikh Mansour also stressed "the importance of remaining on the course of political negotiations aimed at reaching a just and comprehensive peace in the region." Ambassador told al-Noaimi that it was important for Hamas to hear from the UAEG and others in the region about its responsibilities as the elected government to help the Palestinian people live in peace, something that could only be accomplished via a two-state solution. Al-Noaimi reiterated the UAEG's support for the Roadmap and the two-state solution.

16. (C) As reported ref A, UAE President Khalifa approved a \$25 million one-time-only transfer to the PA President to pay salaries. The UAE has provided substantial assistance to the Palestinian people, through projects via its semi-governmental organizations, rather than passing cash directly to the PA. The UAE Red Crescent provided Palestinians with \$88 million in humanitarian assistance from 2000 to 2003. The UAE has built Sheikh Zayed City at a cost of \$62 million, and is building a \$100 million housing complex (Sheikh Khalifa City), both in Gaza. Agence France-Presse cited Hamas delegate Ezat al-Reshq, who accompanied Meshaal, as saying that the UAE assured Hamas

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that it would "go on providing financial aid to the Palestinian people and their Hamas-led government." Al-Reshq also said that the UAE would "continue to sponsor and support infrastructure projects in the occupied Palestinian territories."

17. (C) Comment: We will follow up with Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah upon his return to Abu Dhabi regarding a statement Reuters attributed to al-Reshq that "Hamas received assurances from our brothers in the UAE that they will continue political and financial support as well as support of infrastructure projects in Palestine." End Comment.  
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